

NIFA in the News – Week of June 4, 2012

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In the News

AquaBounty net losses narrow (Stock Market Narrow 5/29). AquaBounty Technologies posts net losses of \$2.7m for the year to the end of December - down from \$5.3m in 2010. The company - which is focused on enhancing productivity in the aquaculture market - was awarded a research grant of \$0.5m from the US National Institute of Food and Agriculture, part of the Department of Agriculture. [Link](#)

House Agriculture Committee Urged To Consider Specialty Crops In Farm Bill (Perishable News 5/29). On May 25, 83 members of Congress representing key specialty crop interests sent a message to House agriculture leadership about the need to defend specialty crop programs and to swiftly pass the Farm Bill. The letter highlights much-needed research programs such as the Specialty Crop Research Initiative, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Agriculture Research Service, as well as key industry development programs such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. [Link](#)

Small Steps to Health and Wealth Colorado workshop to be held in Haxtun in June (The Holyoke Enterprise 5/30). Small Steps to Health and Wealth Colorado is a new program offered by Colorado State University Extension and sponsored by Haxtun Hospital District that addresses how financial problems can affect people's health and how poor health can affect finances. Programs are hands-on and packed full of useful health and finance tips. Initial programs are offered free of charge with funding support provided by the Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant and Haxtun Hospital District. [Link](#)

Moving cotton land to bioenergy crops may be 'green' in more ways than one (North Texas e-News 6/1). What happens when traditional cotton country is converted to grow bioenergy crops? That's what a team of Texas AgriLife Research scientists will determine in a new U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of

Food and Agriculture-funded project. The team, led by Dr. Nithya Rajan, AgriLife Research agronomist in Vernon, has been awarded a \$500,000 Agriculture and Food Research Initiative bioenergy grant. [Link](#)

UGA scientists map and sequence genome of switchgrass relative foxtail millet (EurekAlert 6/1). A newly published genetic sequence and map of foxtail millet, a close relative of switchgrass and an important food crop in Asia, is giving scientists working to increase biofuel and crop yields a powerful new tool. The effort to develop the detailed genetic sequence and map involved 34 scientists from eight institutions and was spearheaded by researchers from the University of Georgia. The results appear in the early online edition of the journal Nature Biotechnology. The research was primarily supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture with additional support from the Oklahoma Center for Science and Technology, the University of Missouri Research Board and the Georgia Research Alliance. [Link](#)

University of Hawaii to receive \$6M for biofuel development (Pacific Business Journal 6/1). The University of Hawaii's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources will receive a \$6 million federal grant to continue its work to convert grass and other biomass into biofuel.

The college will use the money, which comes from a grant administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's U.S. Department of Agriculture Latest from The Business Journals Center Oil projects 5 million for Sauget siteFederal report: No change to crop estimate Follow this company National Institute of Food and Agriculture, to help fund its Biomass Research and Development Initiative, Hawaii's congressional delegation said in a joint statement. [Link](#)

4-H'ers explore youth issues at national meet (St. Augustine Record 6/3). A delegation of four Florida 4-H youth and one adult chaperone joined 200 4-H members from across the country who came to the nation's capital earlier this year to make their voice heard as part of the 2012 National 4-H Conference, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

UGA scientists map and sequence genome of switchgrass relative foxtail millet (Red and Black 6/3). A newly published genetic sequence and map of foxtail millet, a close relative of switchgrass and an important food crop in Asia, is giving scientists working to increase biofuel and crop yields a powerful new tool. The effort to develop the detailed genetic sequence and map involved 34 scientists from eight institutions and was spearheaded by researchers from the University of Georgia. The results appear in the early online edition of the journal Nature Biotechnology. The research was primarily supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture with additional support from the Oklahoma Center for Science and Technology, the University of Missouri Research Board and the Georgia Research Alliance. [Link](#)

Yecch, ptooeey! The 13 oddest and strangest biofuels feedstocks (Biofuels Digest 6/4). In Pennsylvania two summers ago, researchers have identified new corn genes that increase the export of carbohydrates from corn leaves and could result in higher yields for biofuels. The two genes that were isolated are controlling the movement of carbon from leaves to other parts of the plant, and thereby control carbohydrate creation. The researchers, working under a USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, believe that manipulation of the metabolic pathway will give options for increased food or fuel from the plant. [Link](#)

Measuring environmental changes from cotton to biomass (AgProfessional.com 6/4). A three-year study by a team of Texas AgriLife Research scientists has begun to determine how a switch of land use from traditional cotton production in the southwest Cotton Belt to switchgrass or biomass sorghum “would affect the carbon balance, hydrologic cycle and greenhouse gas emissions.” The Texas research will be lead by Nithya Rajan, Ph.D., AgriLife research agronomist at Vernon, Texas. The project is being funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture under the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The grant funding totals \$500,000. [Link](#)

USDA NIFA Awards University of Hawaii \$6 Million For Biomass Biofuel Research (Biofuels Journal 6/4). The University of Hawaii’s College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) will receive \$6 million to continue efforts to convert grass and other biomass into sustainable, commercial biofuel, Senator Daniel K. Inouye, Senator Daniel K. Akaka, U.S. Representative Mazie Hirono and U.S. Representative Colleen Hanabusa announced June 1. The money comes from a grant administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture. [Link](#)

Tennessee State Breaks Ground On New Academic Building (News Channel 5 6/6). Tennessee State University broke ground on a new academic building Wednesday morning. When it's finished, the 30,000 square foot building will be home to an Agricultural Biotechnology Research Building. The building will cost around \$7-million, and the funding comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Link](#)

TSU breaks ground on new agricultural biotechnology building (Nashville City Paper 6/6). Federal, state and Tennessee State University officials broke ground on a new agricultural biotechnology building Wednesday morning. The 30,000-square-foot building will cost around \$7 million, which will be covered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, the director of the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, had a similar message of issues related to agriculture education and awareness. He called TSU’s new building “one more piece of the jigsaw puzzle” of addressing those needs. [Link](#)

House Ag Approps Bill Cuts Research, Food Aid, CFTC Funds (Wisconsin Ag Connection 6/8). Agricultural research programs, international food aid programs and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) all would see cuts to their

FY2013 funding based on a bill adopted by the House Appropriations Committee's agriculture subcommittee on Wednesday. Agricultural research programs, which must be funded each year by appropriators, would receive \$2.5 billion under the bill, a cut of \$35 million from FY2012 spending levels. While \$20 million was cut from the USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) budget, the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) competitive grants program was increased by \$12 million from FY2012. [Link](#)

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York Announces Two Upcoming Workshops (News Channel 34 6/8). NOFA-NY would like to announce two upcoming June field days: “Alternative Meat Markets and Halal Production” and “Certified Hay and Grain Rotations for a Successful Organic Farm Plan”. “Certified Hay and Grain Rotations for a Successful Organic Farm Plan” is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant #2009-49400-05878. [Link](#)

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